

**SPECIFICATION AMENDMENTS**

Applicants propose amending the paragraph that begins on page 12, line 16 as follows:

Subsequently, the reduced-diameter end portion 14 is severed. More specifically, according to this invention, the cutting is made perpendicularly to the fiber axis at a point m spaced slightly, preferably 20 to 30 mm from the boundary between the tapered surface portion TP and the reduced-diameter portion 14 toward the reduced-diameter portion. (The 20 to 30 mm distance can be calculated as 40-60% of the 50 mm diameter of the core or as 16-24% of the 125 mm diameter of the optical fiber element.) This leaves a reduced-diameter portion 14T with a length m integrally joining to the tapered surface portion TP (see Fig. 2).